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FORMER FUNERAL OPERATOR TAKEN INTO CUSTODY
Failed to make required restitution to victims, estates

FRANKFORT, Ky. (July 2, 2008) – A former Pikeville funeral operator was taken into custody yesterday and will spend 30 months in prison after failing to make restitution as ordered by Pike Circuit Court.

Richard D. Justice, 55, pleaded guilty in May to 24 felony counts relating to insurance and funeral services fraud. He was placed under home incarceration and ordered to repay more than \$61,000 to his victims or their estates by the July 1 sentencing date.

According to a continuing investigation by the Kentucky Department of Insurance Fraud Investigation Division, Justice has pocketed more than \$87,000 from senior citizens. He collected funds for prepaid funeral agreements and failed to create and place the funds into a trust, as required by law. He also is charged with collecting money for a headstone and failing to make the purchase or crediting the appropriate trust.

The investigation began in October 2006. Justice previously repaid a portion of the \$87,000.

Justice Funeral Home closed in late 2006 and has since reopened under another name and with new management.

The Department of Insurance is an agency of the Public Protection Cabinet.